

## THE STORY OF INONG BALEE: A CASE STUDY ON BEGGAR FAMILIES IN BANDA ACEH

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### Abstract

*The current study explores the Inong Balee beggars, widows who have been left by their husbands who passed away. Their survival of living is through begging around with their fatherless children in the city of Banda Aceh. The objectives of this study are to identify the demographic condition of Inong Balee beggars, the reasons why inong balee beg, and the educational condition of their children. The study was conducted using a case study approach which includes observation, interviews, and document analysis. Data was collected from April 2012 to August 2012 in the city of Banda Aceh. Purposive sampling was used to select the informants. The interviews and observations were conducted with 12 informants consisting of Inong Balee beggars and their children. The findings have shown that most of the beggars are from regions in Aceh, other than Banda Aceh and began begging in Banda Aceh after the Tsunami in 2004. Furthermore, the main reason for Inong Balee to beg is because they become widows without a main source of income and need to increase the financial status of their family. The education condition of their children is not good; some of them still go to school but do not get a quality education, while others have dropped out of school entirely. This study examines the current status of Inong Balee beggars in terms of social, economic, and educational conditions. The government of Aceh should put a larger focus on Inong balee in order to improve their lives.*

**Keywords:** *Inong Balee; Banda Aceh; beggar; beggar family; children education.*

### A. Introduction

The problem of beggars is a common problem that occurs in urban areas in different parts of the world (Ahmadi, 2010; Namwata et al, 2011). This phenomenon also occurs in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, especially after the 2004 Tsunami. Tsunami reconstruction in 2004-2009 has successfully stimulated the economic growth. As the result, the income of the people in Banda Aceh has increased and Banda Aceh has become the "The City of Hope" or the centre of urbanization in Aceh (Masyrafah and Mc Keon, 2008; The World Bank, 2012). In some points, this reconstruction is a dream of Acehnese to have a better life in

socioeconomic and infrastructural sector. However, another finding also mentioned that this condition has resulted another unexpected impact, the economic growing, in Banda Aceh, which is not happened in other regencies, has made Banda Aceh as a major destination for beggars from all other areas in Aceh (Waspada, 2011; Mardira 2011).

The beggars' problem is an accumulation of various problems that occur related to poverty, low education levels, lack of job skills, environment, social issues, cultural issues, and health. Beggars are one of the negative impacts of development, particularly in urban development. There is successful development in cities but a delay in development happens in rural areas. This causes migration of people from rural to urban areas.

The problem of beggars is a common problem in urban areas in different parts of the world. The number of beggars in many urban areas has been increasing tremendously over decades. The situation has become worse because beggars have not only increased in terms of numbers, but the nature, category and scope of begging has evolved. Another factor is the fact that some people still regard begging as a normal phenomenon (Habib 2010; Namwata ,Mgabo, Dimoso, 2012).

This phenomenon also occurred in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, especially after the 2004 Tsunami disaster. The post Tsunami reconstruction (2004-2009) successfully stimulated economic growth even more rapidly than ever before and transformed "the face" of the city. It also increased the income of the people and made Banda Aceh the centre of urbanization in Aceh. Subsequently people saw Banda Aceh as "The City of Hope" (Masyrafah and McKeon 2008). In some ways, this reconstruction was a dream for the Acehnese to have a better life in terms of socio-economic status and infrastructure. However, others have found that the economic growth has resulted in another unexpected impact; economic growth in Banda Aceh, which did not develop as extensively in other regions of Aceh, has made Banda Aceh a major destination for beggars from all other areas in Aceh (Waspada 2011).

Many reports in the media have highlighted that most people believe that the increasing number of beggars is a cause of the government's failure to address the socio-economic issues that occurred after the Aceh conflict and after the Tsunami disaster. There are also people who assume that this phenomenon reflects moral decline among Acehnese society, in which people no longer feel ashamed to beg as a profession. The reports also show that beggars have been a social problem that receive special attention from the government of Banda Aceh. Several efforts include sending the beggars back to their regions, arresting them for rehabilitation, and taking them to training centers. However, these kinds of efforts have yet to show improved conditions for these people. Most of the efforts tend to focus on repressive actions rather than prevention or even solving the real causes of the beggar issue, which are poverty and economic disparity.

Beggars are individuals or groups who earn income by begging on the streets or in public places in various ways for charity from others (Saptono 2008). Begging is an informal economic activity that involves the solicitation of a unilateral voluntary gift (most often money) in a public area (Lynch 2005). Begging is asking for help, charity, or donations from both individuals and institutions. A beggar is identified as an individual who looks ragged, which is used as a means to express what it needs and can also be used in other.

Nadia (2011:9) identified three categories of begging which are based on motivation: begging based on need, convenience or preference, and organized crime. "Begging based on need" refers to the most common form of begging which stems from the human need to survive (when an individual runs out of all options to sustain her or his existence). "Convenience or preference" refers to people who find begging to be their most efficient way of making a living given their skill sets, aspirations, and preferences related to income and leisure. "Organized crime" refers to people forced into begging by criminal networks.

Previous studies conducted by Habib (2010), Nadia (2011), Namwata, Mgabo, and Dimoso. (2012), Osa- Edoh and Samuel (2012) show that the reasons for becoming a beggar include poverty, low level of association, lack of viable economic alternatives, lack of professional skills, peer influence, family disintegration, orphan hood, physical disability, illness, long term unemployment, demographic pressures, religious factors, criminal organizations, and addiction.

There are many factors that encourage people to become beggars. These factors consist of internal and external factors, and permanent or accidental factors. These factors, among others, include "urbanization factors". Migration results in various kinds of impacts on local communities and new communities. People who move from rural areas to cities hope to improve their families' economic situation. Another factor encouraging people to become beggars is poverty. People are forced to beg because of income inequalities, pressure from inflation, disasters or long time conflicts. Another factor is powerlessness. People who do not have power face difficulty in providing the daily needs for their family because they do not have jobs. The third factor is unemployment. These people move to a place where they cannot find a decent job, or can only find a job that leads to crime or other negative things, and thus may have to consider begging. The last factor is physical disability. Some people beg because of limits in their physical abilities, including people with physical disabilities and the elderly. But some are doing the work of begging as a profession despite having a strong physical condition.

Previous studies by Devi (2008) and Riki (2011) in places where beggars usually beg show that most beggar families in Banda Aceh are composed of a mother and her children. The mothers are generally widows who encourage their children to beg with them. This condition is also supported by the preliminary observations of the authors.

## **B. The Inong Balee Beggar**

In Acehnese language, *Inong* refers to woman, while *Balee* refers to widow, and thus *inong balee* means a woman who is a widow. However, the term *inong balee* is also the name of a naval fleet led by Admiral Keumala Hayati in the period of Sultan Al-Mukammil (1589-1604). The members were widows whose husbands died in the war between Aceh and Portugal. The term *inong balee* also refers to the military wing of GAM (1976-2005) or the Free Aceh Movement (Ganelli, Rabialdi and Rika 2010) called *pasukan Inong Balee*, whose members were *inong balee*, woman whose husbands were killed in the Aceh conflict and then became personnel of GAM to get revenge (Ganelli Rabialdi & Rika 2010).

Acehnese women are known for having strong, firm and tenacious personalities. They fought for their families during the conflict and survived the Tsunami (Ganelli, Rabialdi and Rika 2010). Unfortunately, the conflict for nearly three decades, dimmed the glory of Acehnese women as they lose their protection and become objects of exploitation. Today, some women, the *inong balee*, have been forced to choose a profession that is often looked down upon by the public. There are a variety of reasons why they have chosen to become beggars.

*Inong Balee* beggars come from various areas in Aceh; they generally bring along their children to beg. A study conducted by Devi (2008) found that the category of beggars in Banda Aceh consisted of a widow (*Inong Balee*) and children who are exploited by their parents to beg. The use of children for begging has also become a global problem. Studies by Onolemhemhen and Pugh (2002) found children being used to carry out activities for begging by their teachers in religious schools. In 2010 the Department of Social Welfare and Labor of Banda Aceh arrested 17 beggar children and entrusted them to an orphanage. The children were discovered by officers when participating with their parents in begging on the streets. At the orphanage the children were given a good education to change the mindset and way of life (Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat 2010).

Moreover, this study attempts to get an in-depth perspective on *Inong Balee* beggars in Banda Aceh, their demographic and social condition, the factors that cause them to beg, the amount of money they earn by begging, their family background and the condition of their children's education. In addition this study will assist policy makers and stakeholders in order to take the necessary steps to resolve the problem of beggars in the city of Banda Aceh.

### **C. Location Of The Study**

Banda Aceh is the capital city of Aceh province. Banda Aceh is 808 years old and is one of the oldest Islamic cities in Southeast Asia. The most memorable moment for Banda Aceh occurred on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 when an earthquake and Tsunami with 8.9 magnitude destroyed one third of the region of Banda Aceh and hundreds of thousands of people in Aceh became victims. The Tsunami not only changed the geography of Banda Aceh and the society, but it also became a very important positive factor in the realization of peace in Aceh after twenty-nine years of conflict.

Based on 2010 census by the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik) the population of Banda Aceh is 224,289, consisting of 115,296 males and 108,913 females (BPS 2011). This number is less than the population from before the Tsunami happened. In 2004 the population of people in Banda Aceh was about 265,553.

Through the assistance of the Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (BRR), international agencies, and donors from various NGOs, the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of Banda Aceh has been successfully carried out after the earthquake and Tsunami and the peace agreement of Helsinki between the government of Indonesia and GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka). Through the peace and rehabilitation and reconstruction, Banda Aceh is finally able to rise up (The World Bank 2012). Improved economic conditions during the reconstruction is also a reason why beggars migrated from their region to the city of Banda Aceh.

Most of the population in Banda Aceh works in the service, trading, and construction sectors (Badan Pusat Statistik 2011). The main source of income in Banda Aceh is different from other regions in the province of Aceh, where the majority of people relies on agriculture. Therefore, this is also another reason why beggars migrate to Banda Aceh.

### **D. Method**

The qualitative method was utilized in this research to produce rich information and to understand particular cases and situations. The current study was conducted according to the case study method. According to Yin (2003: 13-14) a case study is focused on the investigation of current phenomena in the context of real life, especially taking into account a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The present study was conducted from April 2012 to August 2012. The techniques used were observation, interviews, and document analysis. Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 55) state that common techniques in data collection in qualitative research are participant

observation, unstructured interviews, and document analysis. Observations were done since the beginning of the research on the participants, participant activities and relevant physical settings. Observations helped the researchers determine which informants to interview. Unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted with purposefully selected informants. Document analysis was done at the beginning and the end of the study to complement the findings from the interviews and the observations. The documents analyzed include public documents from Badan Pusat Statistik (Central Agency on Statistics), agency records and mass media records.

Data triangulation was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data (Creswell 2013: 251-252). According to Merriam (2009: 229), triangulation uses various sources, methods, and instruments to ensure and enhance the validity and reliability of a study. In this research, information from interviews, observations and document analysis have been processed in triangulation. The most part of the data was collected through various techniques and based on different sources to enhance the reliability and validity. In particular, data regarding demographic and social condition of beggars were collected through document analysis, observation and interview, information on beggar's revenue was gathered through interview and observation and the data about the condition of their children's education was collected through observation and interview.

The study was carried out at the locations where the beggars were running their activities such as at Mesjid Raya Baiturrahman and Pasar Atjeh, Peunayong which are the city center and the hub of city's economic activity. Furthermore, the study was also focused on the location of temporary residences of the beggars around the city which include Ladong-Neuheun, and Gampong Jawa which are located in the outskirts of the city.

Regarding ethical consideration, all of the informants were consented to being involved in the study voluntarily (some after being convinced but without force). The researchers were highly concerned about the anonymity of informants and some information that was considered confidential by the informants (confidential personal information).

When this study was being conducted there was no reliable data about the real number of beggars in the city of Banda Aceh. 12 informants were selected, consisting of 5 *inong balee* beggars and 7 beggar children. A purposeful sampling was used to select the informants. Selecting informants purposefully was intended to help the researcher get the most suitable participants with the problems in the study, to obtain a lot of information, to reflect the variation (in terms of areas of

origin) and to get the most convenient way to study the issue. The nature of a qualitative research is that it is very difficult to generalize the results and in this study the informants were rather limited. However, naturalistic generalization may be applied to the similar contexts or sites to this research (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The process of data analysis included the following steps: managing or organizing the data, reading whole texts, describing the case based on its context, establishing themes, using direct interpretation, and presenting an in-depth picture of the case (Creswell 2013: 190-191). In this study, the observation finding was recorded in the field notes and the information from interviews was recorded in a recorder device. After that the data both from field notes and from interviews were transcribed. Most of the data from interviews were in the local Acehnese language. However, since the researchers are natives Acehnese there had no any barrier in the process of transcribing the data. Moreover, after reading process, all the data from fieldnotes, transcription, and documents were organized into codes. Coding aims to arrange the data into categories or contexts. Following this, the data was generated based on the themes.

## E. Results And Discussion

Twelve informants who consisted of five families that carry out the activities of begging in Banda Aceh. have participated in this study. Based on the analysis of the findings, the informants' background is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Informants' Demographics

Informant	Sex	Age	Locaton of Origin	Information
Informant 1	Female	42	Aceh Selatan	-
Informant 2	Female	35	Aceh Utara	-
Informant 3	Female	39	Pidie	-
Informant 4	Female	40	Aceh Besar	-
Informant 5	Female	36	Aceh Utara	-
Informant 6	Female	15	Aceh Selatan	The daughter of I 1
Informant 7	Female	13	Aceh Selatan	The daughter of I 1
Informant 8	Male	15	Aceh Utara	The son of I 2
Informant 9	Male	13	Aceh Utara	The son of I 2
Informant 10	Female	12	Pidie	Nephew of I 3

Informant 11	Female	11	Aceh Besar	The daughter of I 4
Informant 12	Female	16	Aceh Utara	The daughter of I 5

Note: I (Informant).

**The first family**, is a family of informant 1 from Aceh Selatan. The informant became a widow because her husband died from an illness. She rents a house in Neuhen, Aceh Besar (15 km from Banda Aceh) and began begging in 2006. The informant revealed that she begs around the Baiturrahman mosque and Pasar Atjeh. During Ramadhan, she and her family begged by going from one house to another. The informant also encouraged her children (informant 6 and 7) to beg.

**The second family**, is a family of informant 2 from Aceh Utara. She became a widow because her husband died in 2003 during martial law in Aceh. The informant and her family said that she used to be homeless, moving from one place to another place in Banda Aceh. She has been living in Peuniti, Gampong Jawa and several other locations. She has been begging since after the Tsunami in 2004 and admitted that her primary location for begging is around Baiturrahman Mosque, but she also often goes to various parts of the city to beg, such as Neusu and Seutui or Lamteumen. The informant also asked her children (Informant 8 and 9) to beg.

**The third family**, is a family of informant 3 from Pidie. The informant became a widow because her husband died during the Aceh conflict. While in Banda Aceh, the informant lived in Kampong Jawa. She has been begging since 2007. The informant has begged especially in areas such as Merduati, Penayong, Pasar Atjeh and Baiturrahman Mosque. Informant 3 also invites her nephew (informant 10), who no longer has parents, to join her in begging.

**The fourth family**, is a family of informant 4 from Aceh Besar. The informant became a widow because her husband died from an illness. The informant lives in her house in Sibreh, Aceh Besar and comes every day to Banda Aceh to beg. The main location where she begs is around Baiturrahman Mosque and Pasar Atjeh and she has been begging since 2008. Informant 4 has a child (informant 11) who participates in the activity of begging with her. Informant 4 stated:

‘Ka 4 thon..awai ken jakkedroebaresa ban jiikotjih...’ (This is my fourth year ..I have done this alone, just now she came with me (while pointing her daughter).

**The fifth family**, is a family of informant 5 from Aceh Utara. The informant became a widow because her husband died during the Aceh conflict. The informant and her son live in Alue Naga, Aceh Besar. She begs in several places in the city of Banda Aceh, such as Rex Penayong, Jambo Tape, Sp. Surabaya, and Prada. She has 3 children but only the eldest



son (informant 12) begs with her, while the other children are taken care of by her family in the village. Informant 5 has been begging since 2005.

In general, even though the beggars live together in Banda Aceh, they choose to beg separately with their children. This way they are able to reach more locations to increase their income. Another demographic piece of data shows that most beggars only completed primary school, and some of them did not even complete their primary education. Table 2 shows the education level of beggars in the city of Banda Aceh.

Table 2. The Education Level of *Inong Balee* Beggar

Informant Education Background	
Informant 1	Graduated from Elementary School
Informant 2	Graduated from Elementary School
Informant 3	Dropped out of Elementary School
Informant 4	Dropped out of Elementary School
Informant 5	Graduated from Elementary School

Generally, the level of *inong balee* education is only at the basic level. Their education is only in primary school, and some of them did not even complete their primary education. The level of education may have an impact on the capabilities and difficulties they experienced when seeking employment in the formal sector. Besides that, parental education level also determines parents' perception of the importance of education for children.

#### 1. Beggar Families in Banda Aceh

Document analysis has shown that the problem of beggars continues to be solved in various ways by the government of Banda Aceh, including prohibiting people from giving money to beggars and providing skill training to beggars (Badan Pusat Statistik 2010). However, beggars generally flee from the training places or go back to being beggars after they receive skills training. One of the major factors that cause the beggars to return to begging although they have obtained skills training is the high income that they get from begging in Banda Aceh (Devi 2008; Riki 2011).

Furthermore, field observations have shown that the beggars work in a well-organized system; this is clear in the distribution of the working area among the

beggars and the use of children. The study has found that the beggars distribute areas all over the city so that they can divide places for begging more evenly. Some beggars choose certain locations for begging, while others go door to door from home, shops, offices and crowded places.

The *InongBalee* beggars come from other regions of Aceh such as Aceh Selatan, Aceh Utara, Aceh Besar and Pidie. Some of the beggars live at several locations around the city of Banda Aceh including Kampong Jawa, Ladong, and Aceh Besar temporarily, while others sleep in storefronts around Baiturrahman Mosque. The results of field observations also reveal that beggars blend with the public and do not attract much attention.

## 2. Reasons for Begging

There are various reasons why the *Inong Balee* choose the profession of begging. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons for begging

InformantThe reasons for begging	
Informant 1	Becomes widow without the main source of income and needs to increase family's economy condition
Informant 2	Becomes widow without main source of income
Informant 3	Becomes widow and lives in poverty
Informant 4	Becomes widow
Informant 5	Becomes widow and lives in poverty
Informant 6	Financial issues
Informant 7	Physically disabled and has financial problem
Informant 8	Fatherless and has financial issue
Informant 9	Fatherless
Informant 10	An orphan
Informant 11	Fatherless
Informant 12	Fatherless

Informant 1 said that she had been a widow for a long time and there was no financial support from the government for her to start a business.

*'Menyeji bi modal le pemerintah, hanakujak (mengemis).Kabehkantoku peu ekproposalmesaboh tan iteubit, abehdumkupesapat no agenda. Menyehanakujaklagenyoekakehdeukkamoe'* ('If the government gave capital for starting a business, I would not go begging. I have already sent proposals to government offices (to ask for business capital), but none of the proposals were successful, I just got the queue number. If I did not do this (begging) we would starve').

Informant 2 revealed that she begs because she is a widow and no one provides income for her family. Her husband died in the Aceh conflict.

*'Kamoekorbankonflik, lakolonmeninggal lam DM, luehTsunamiphonkamoejak u Banda'* ('We are victims of the conflict, my husband died during DM (Martial Law), after the Tsunami we went to Banda (for begging'), (Informant 3).

Informant 3 revealed that she is begging because she has been a widow for a long time and suffers from poverty, so she had to take on the husband's responsibility to make a living. She said that previously she was only a farmer who worked in the rice fields in the village with insufficient income. Informant 5 stated that she has been begging since she became a widow. She said that her husband died in the conflict, so she lost the main earner in her family. She did not want to accept any help from her siblings because they were also not in a good economic condition. According to her:

*"Lakoehana le kaabeh umu masakonflik, saudaranahai, man lageadeklonmekedroejihpihmenameu tan, puekeijak bantu tanyoe"* (My husband died during the conflict, no siblings, but like my brother, his condition was still not sufficient for himself, how could I ask for help)" (Informant 5).

Table 3 shows the reasons why 'childbeggar informants (informants 6,7,8,9,10,11 and 12) choose to become beggars. Being an orphan is a common reason, as proposed by informant 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Informant 8 revealed that he participates in begging not only for reasons of being an orphan, but also to support his family. According to informant 8:

*'Lon aneukyatim. Ayah kamoemeninggal lam konflik, seablonehana le ayah lon bantu makmitapeng'* ('I am an orphan. Our father died during the conflict, because I do not have a father anymore, then I help my mom to earn money (by begging').

This study also indicates that income is the other main factor for why informants become beggars, but this was not clearly stated by the informants. This study has found that the high income of family beggars overall is above the provincial minimum wage.

Table 4. The *InongBalee*and Child Beggar's Income

Name/Initial	Children Beggar's Income (Indonesian Rupiah)
Informant 1	100.000
Informant 2	85.000-90.000
Informant 3	80.000
Informant 4	90.000
Informant 5	95.000
Informant 6	50.000-60.000
Informant 7	75.000-80.000
Informant 8	50.000
Informant 9	50.000
Informant 10	55.000
Informant 11	60.000
Informant 12	70.000

The accumulation of parent and child beggars' income is as follows :

1. The first family(consisting of informants 1, 6 and 7), the accumulation of family income reaches IDR 225,000-240,000 (MYR 75-80) each day.
2. The second family(consisting of informants 3, 8 and 9), the accumulation of family income is IDR 185,000-190,000 (MYR 61-63) each day.
3. The third family(consisting of informant4and 10), the family income cumulatively reaches IDR 135,000 (MYR 45) each day.
4. The fourth family(consisting of informant 6 and 11), the accumulative of family income reaches IDR 150,000 (MYR 50) each day.
5. The fifth family(consisting of informant 5 and 12), ), the accumulative of family income reaches IDR 165,000 (MYR 55)each day.

The results of this study are similar with studies conducted by Devi (2008) and Riki (2011). High income could be a very significant motivating factor for begging (Nadia 2011). So money is a very significant motivation for beggars to beg, or in this case to ask their children to join in begging. According to the beggars, most of their income spent in their home town.

The findings illustrate how *inong balee* are forced into becoming beggars. Being a widow in rural areas which have been hit by decades of conflict that limit economic access can bring several consequences. At the beginning they lose their main financial sources (that used to be provided by their husbands). Then they must take the responsibility of the "family backbone" to tackle the family's financial problem. It has never been an easy task, but it is especially difficult when facing the economic slowdown and rising poverty during the Aceh Conflict from 1976 until 2005.. Even when they tried to get help, they had to face the fact that their relatives were not in better economic conditions than themselves. In addition, some informants in this research revealed their frustration in hoping for government aid. Subsequently they were forced into poverty.

The 2004 Tsunami brought blessings in disguise to the Acehnese. It ended the conflict with the Helsinki Peaceful Agreement in August 2005. This then triggered the reconstruction process that in short stimulated economic growth. The reconstruction was centralized in Banda Aceh because the city received the most severe impact of the Tsunami (besides the west coast of Aceh). Subsequently this created an unexpected impact on the gap of economic growth; the difference in the poverty rate between Banda Aceh and other regions in Aceh increased after 2005 (Badan Pusat Statistik 2011). For particulars about the rate of poverty in several regions of beggars origin and the rate of poverty in Banda Aceh, see table 5.

Table 5. Rates of Poverty in Several Regions in Aceh (regions of beggar origins)  
measured in the percentage of the total population.

Region	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Aceh Selatan	26.98%	24.58%	24.72%	19.4%	17.5%
Aceh Utara	35.87%	34.98%	33.16%	27.56%	25.29%
Pidie	36.01%	35.32%	33.31%	28.11%	25.87%
Aceh Besar	29.40%	28.66%	26.69%	21.52%	20.09%
Banda Aceh	8.37%	8.25%	6.61%	9.56%	8.64%

As illustrated earlier, the informants of *inong balee* got involved in begging just after the Tsunami. from 2005 until 2008. Table 5 illustrates the gap of poverty rate between Banda Aceh and the other regions where beggars come from. However, table 5 also shows a decrease in the poverty rate in those regions over 2005-2009.

At first *inong balee* were driven by their unlucky condition, lack of support, and poverty, but more recently the situation and orientation of *inong balee* changes just after few years (this is not a complete sentence). Although it is not directly mentioned by the informants, later the *inong balee* beggars found that their activities provide a much more sufficient income than their previous agricultural jobs. Surprisingly, being a beggar is more profitable than being a laborer, a small trader, or even a low ranked government employee in the city. At this point there is no reluctance to beg. Realizing this opportunity, more recently (1-2 years ago) the beggars influenced their children to get involved in such activities. The child beggars also confess that they voluntarily (not by force, but some children were convinced by their mothers) got involved. As their mothers became widows, they were fatherless children that had to share the responsibility for supporting their family. The children also felt the joy of making money from their own efforts, while their goals for pursuing education diminished.

### 3. Children's Education

Another important result in this study is the high dropout tendency in children from beggar families. Only 3 out of 7 of the beggars' children are still in school. Table 6 shows the state of education of the child beggars.

Table 6. The Education of the Beggars' Children

Informant	Education Status
Informant 6	Secondary school. Dropped out of school 2 years ago when she was in Grade
Informant 7	Elementary School (ES). Active and in grade 6
Informant 8	Elementary School. Graduated from ES 2 years ago, but did not Continue his education to the next level
Informant 9	Elementary School. Graduated from ES 1 year ago, but did not continue his education to the next level
Informant 10	Elementary School. Active in grade 5
Informant 11	Elementary School. Active in grade 5
Informant 12	Secondary School Dropped out of school 1 year ago when in grade 2

In summary, Table 6 shows the beggars' children who dropped out of school: informant 6,8,9, and 12. Informant 6 quit school two years ago when in grade 1 in secondary school, and informant 12 dropped out of school when in grade 1 in secondary school. Informant 3 graduated from elementary school two years ago and informant 9 graduated from elementary school one year ago, but they did not continue to secondary school. The findings also show that there is no indication that they will continue their education immediately. Informant 6 states:

*'Sang hana thon nyoe bang, menyemaknaiyu, maknyanbak long, sang hanakujak bang'* ('It looks like not this year, my mother said, but it's up to me, it looks like I will not go (to school)').

There are 3 informants who are still in school. Informant 7 and 10 currently are in 6th grade and informant 11 is in 5th grade. The parents (*Inong Balee beggars*) revealed that they had chosen the schools for their children. Informant 1, 2 and 4 claimed the major considerations when choosing a school are reasonable cost, accessible location, and not too prestigious of a school. Informant 2 stated:

*'Bah bak toe-toe manteng. Peutajok man baksikulageut that, eunteksapat-sapatngeunaneukureng kaya ka minder jih, nyanbaksikula i lake jaknyan, urengsampengrumoh sit pegah bang xx becak, geutnyanleubehsijutabeuh, keupengseragam, pengbangku, pengbuku'* ('I prefer to place the children nearby (her temporary resident is in Banda Aceh). If I put them in the good school (prestigious), together with rich kids he will feel inferior later, it is a school that he wants to go, my neighbor said that, she spent more than one million (to concede) uniform, chair and books').

There are 4 of 7 children that have dropped out of school, 2 were stalled after elementary school and 2 of them dropped out in grade 1 and 2. There are 3 children that are still studying at elementary school, but based on previous cases, these beggars' children's education is most likely also vulnerable after graduating from elementary school.

Another issue was the quality of education. The beggars have sufficient income, which means they can afford to give a quality education to their children. However, beggars tend to avoid sending their children to prestigious schools due to their concern about their children's feelings of inferiority from their parents' profession. Beggar families often feel inferior in many aspects of life (*inferiority complex*), including their social relation with the society (Habib 2010).

## **F. Conclusion**

The beggars in Banda Aceh generally come from other regions in Aceh and have been begging in Banda Aceh since the 2004 Tsunami. They live in Banda Aceh temporarily while carrying out the begging activity. This phenomenon also prevailed among the *InongBalee* beggars. They come from other regions to survive after the death of their husbands. The husbands of some beggars died during the Aceh conflict and these women try to make a better life in Banda Aceh.

Driven by their status as widows responsible for their families' financial issues, economic conditions in rural areas, lack of support from relatives and the government, and the economic opportunities in Banda Aceh, and finally after dealing with their own moral consciousness, the informants reluctantly become beggars in Banda Aceh. Yet, lately most of them have found that begging is more profitable than other work; the income as a beggar is much higher than the minimum wage in Aceh province. Thus, they feel more inclined to beg; this fact is another motivation for *Inong Balee* to beg and may lead them to addiction. Therefore, the *Inong Balee* also invite their children to get involved in begging.

This phenomenon seems even worse because the research finds that the educational condition of child beggars is not very good. There are 7 child beggars involved in this research, but only 3 child beggars are still in school. This study shows that child beggars are very vulnerable to dropping out of school. Psychologically, it seems this social status (as beggars) has a bad impact on their self-confidence around others as they tend to feel bad and poor among their friends in school. Moreover, these two phenomena seem to be sensitive issues for the quality of life of Acehnese people. Even though they are just a minor community, the future generation will follow similar circle of habit with an addiction to begging and earning money in easier ways.

The result of this study can provide preliminary description of the socio-economic and educational condition of beggar family in Banda Aceh and depict the real condition from the beggars point of view so the more appropriate and effective policy can be taken. However, further comprehensive- policy study regarding the issue is required to make the policy really work.

The government should seriously handle these problems both in terms of more immediate results by providing life skills training and helping them get better jobs while at the same time enforcing the law and resolving the core problems of economic disparity between urban and rural areas, the lack of job opportunities in rural areas, and the traditional problems of poverty among rural farmers. Educational agencies and civil society also may take part in these issues by providing scholarships and non-formal education for the beggar children. Another important task is to raise public awareness on



the issue of beggars. It is impossible to expect the issue of beggars to be solved only by government programs when people still give money to beggars. However, further study is needed to develop a solution to help improve this situation and to give a hope to this community that they can move on.

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